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Personnel

AIR FORCE MENTORING

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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-34, *Air Force Mentoring Program*. It provides guidance on how to carry out Air Force Mentoring, which was established to bring about a cultural change in the way we view professional development. Mentoring is an essential ingredient in developing well-rounded, professional, and competent future leaders. The goal of this instruction is to help each person reach his or her full potential, thereby enhancing the overall professionalism of the Air Force. It applies to all commanders and supervisors/raters of Air Force military and civilian personnel. See [Attachment 1](#) for a glossary of references, abbreviations, and acronyms.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed.

The mentoring program is expanded beyond company grade officers. It now includes all officer, enlisted and civilian personnel.

1. Definition. A mentor is defined as “a trusted counselor or guide.” Mentoring, therefore, is a relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom guides another person to develop both personally and professionally.

2. Scope. Mentoring helps prepare people for the increased responsibilities they will assume as they progress in their careers. Mentoring is not a promotion enhancement program. Mentoring is an ongoing process and not confined to formal feedback required by AFI 36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*; AFI 36-2403, *Enlisted Evaluation System*; and AFI 36-1001, *Managing the Civilian Performance Program*. It is a professional development program designed to help each individual reach his or her maximum potential. Professional development is not a new concept. It occurs at every echelon and activity. AFI 36-2909, *Professional and Unprofessional Relationships*, and AFI 36-704, *Civilian Conduct and Responsibility*, set forth rules regarding maintenance of professional relationships. In particular, mentoring is part of a

professional relationship because it fosters free communication by subordinates with superiors concerning their careers, performance, duties and missions. Supervisors should be made aware of Merit Systems Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices outlined in AFI 36-102, *Basic Authority and Responsibility for Civilian Personnel Management*. It enhances morale and discipline and improves the operational environment while maintaining respect for authority.

2.1. Air Force mentoring covers a wide range of areas, such as career guidance, technical and professional development, leadership, Air Force history and heritage, air and space power doctrine, strategic vision, and contribution to joint warfighting. It also includes knowledge of the ethics of our military and a civil service professions and understanding of the Air Force's core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.

2.2. Commanders and supervisors must encourage subordinates to read and comprehend air and space power literature such as Air Force doctrine and operational warfighting publications and the books in the CSAF Professional Reading Program (<http://www.af.mil/lib/csafbook>). See **Attachment 2** for a list of the books in the CSAF Professional Reading Program. Suggested reading lists from each of the PME schools are also good sources for professional readings.

3. Assignment of Mentors. Commanders are responsible for promoting a robust mentoring program within their unit. The immediate supervisor or rater is designated as the primary mentor (coach, guide, role model, etc.) for each of his or her subordinates. This designation in no way restricts the subordinate's desire to seek additional counseling and professional development advice from other sources or mentors. Supervisors and commanders must make themselves available to subordinates who seek career guidance and counsel.

3.1. Key to the mentoring process is the direct involvement of the commander and supervisor in the professional development of his or her people. Commanders and supervisors must continually challenge their subordinates to improve. It is essential to provide clear performance feedback and guidance in setting realistic professional and personal development goals -- near, mid- and long-term.

3.2. Several programs exist to help the commander and supervisor focus attention on a subordinate's professional development. Among these are performance feedback, professional military education (PME) programs, academic education opportunities, assignment policies, recognition programs, and the individual's own personal development actions. Additionally, there are many organizations, programs, and associations dedicated to the advancement and education of military professionals (active duty, reserve and civil service). Organizations may wish to contact those programs and groups for speakers, implement program chapters on their bases, or use their resources to develop mentoring programs. See **Attachment 3** for a list of such organizations.

4. Mentoring Responsibilities. Mentoring is an inherent responsibility of leadership. Supervisors must take an active role in the professional development of their subordinates. They must assist their people by providing realistic evaluation of both performance and potential. Supervisors must also be positive role models.

4.1. Raters will discuss performance, potential, and professional development plans with their subordinates during performance feedback sessions, as required by AFI 36-2909 and AFI 36-1001.

4.2. When mentoring subordinates on career development, raters should carefully study the applicable Air Force specialty career path pyramid and career experience matrix found in their respective

career guidance. Pay particular attention to assignment and job levels as they apply to company grade through senior field grades, senior NCOs, and civilian equivalents. Also, note the technical expertise key on each career experience matrix to determine what leadership opportunities and staff experience are considered mandatory, essential, desired, or optional. Functional managers are responsible for ensuring that technical mentoring within their career field is available and raters should ensure their people have continuous access to career field unique mentoring and expertise.

4.2.1. Career path guidance for officers is found in the *Officer Career Path Guide* located on the Air Force Personnel Center website (<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil>.)

4.2.2. Supervisors of enlisted personnel should refer to the career field education and training plan (CFETP) in the OJT training record.

4.2.3. Supervisors of civilian personnel may refer to AFI 36-401 for determining training requirements or developing career enhancement plans or Individual Development Plans. AFI 36-1001 provides guidance for establishing job performance requirements. Supervisors of civilians enrolled in a career program should refer to AFMAN 36-606, Volume 2, *Air Force Civilian Career Planning*. Civilian career paths are also located on the Air Force Personnel Center website under Career Programs.

4.3. It is important for mentors to distinguish between individual goals, career aspirations, and realistic expectations. Each individual defines a successful career differently--there are numerous paths to meet individual career and success goals. Foremost, however, individuals must focus on AF institutional needs: We must develop people who are skilled in the employment and support of air and space power and how it meets the security needs of the nation. While there is nothing wrong with lofty goals, mentors must ensure their people realize what high, but achievable, goals are.

5. PME and Academic Education. PME and academic education enhance performance in each phase of professional development and build on the foundation of leadership abilities shown during the earlier stages of an individual's career. PME's role in professional development is to prepare individuals to take on increased responsibilities appropriate to their grade, and to enhance their contribution to the Air Force.

5.1. The focus for each person should be on developing skills needed to enhance professional competence, and become superior leaders while expanding their operational employment of air and space power knowledge. This is the primary focus of Air Force PME. See AFI 36-2301, *Professional Military Education*, for PME information.

5.2. Post-secondary degrees (associate's, bachelor's, master's or other advanced academic degrees) can be important to professional development to the extent they enhance the degree holder's job and professional qualifications. A degree directly related to individual's primary specialty area, or occupational series, is the most appropriate because it adds to the depth of experience. In some career fields, advanced formal education is a prerequisite for certain jobs. A master's or advanced degree in management or more general studies would tend to enhance job performance for personnel reaching grade levels where breadth of development should take place.

6. Professional Associations. There are many private organizations that seek to develop professional skills and associations for individuals in many career fields and technical specialties. Membership in such associations may provide additional opportunities for mentoring as well as broadening technical expertise.

7. Evaluation and Performance Feedback. Air Force evaluation systems are designed to accurately appraise performance. Substantive, formal feedback is essential to the effectiveness of the evaluation systems. Performance evaluation systems are an integral part of mentoring and professional development. Performance feedback is designed to provide a realistic assessment of performance, career standing, future potential, and actions required to assist the ratee in reaching the next level of professional development. Additional information on the evaluation system is available in AFI 36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*; AFPAM 36-2404, *Guide to USAF Officer Evaluation System*; AFPAM 36-2506, *You and Your Promotions, The Air Force Officer Promotion Program*; AFI 36-2403, *Enlisted Evaluation System*; AFMAN 36-2627, *Airman and NCO Performance Feedback System (EES)*, and AFI 36-1001, *Managing the Civilian Performance Program*.

8. Promotion Selection.

8.1. Commissioned officers are selected for promotion by central selection boards which evaluate records using the "whole person" concept. Factors included in the "whole person" assessment are job performance, level of assignments, professional competence, breadth and depth of experience, job responsibility, PME, and specific achievements (awards, decorations, and special recognition). Additional information is available in AFPD 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*, and AFPAM 36-2506.

8.1.1. Mentors should ensure that officers don't view a successful career solely in terms of promotion success. An officer should understand they had a successful career by achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel. Labeling success at a senior grade has several serious drawbacks, among them are careerist thinking and a mindset that not making a specific grade represents a failed career. Mentors should ensure officers understand how their promotion system works. Additional information is available in AFI 36-2501, *Officer Promotions and Selective Continuations*.

8.2. The Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) outlines the requirements for promotion selection and provides feedback score sheets to enlisted members who were considered for promotion. These score sheets help the individual determine professional development needs. See AFI 36-2502, *Airman Promotion Program*, for additional information.

8.2.1. Selection for promotion to senior master sergeant (SMSgt) and chief master sergeant (CMSgt) is accomplished using an integrated weighted and central selection board system. In addition to the weighted score, the central selection board evaluates each individual, using the "whole person" concept. Board scores are determined by considering the following factors: performance, leadership, breadth of experience, job responsibility, professional competence, specific achievements and education. The board score is added to the weighted score to determine order of merit for promotion. See AFI 36-2502 for additional information.

8.3. Civilian employees compete for promotion based on their experience and education. Normally, they are referred on a promotion certificate, and are considered by selecting officials who review their qualifications. It is important that civilians ensure their records reflect all current experience and education as well as other skills, abilities, and competencies that they possess. It is also important that mentors consider the total or whole person scores and provide advice on ways employees can enhance their qualifications through additional education, development assignments, substantive volunteer experience and other broadening experiences, to position themselves for promotion opportunities. Mentors must also ensure their civilian employees are aware of the application procedures and requirements for career program and non-career program positions within the commuting area and

outside the commuting area at installations within the continental U.S. (CONUS) or outside CONUS through the overseas Employment Programs.

9. The Military Assignment System. The focus for both the mentor and individual should be on obtaining an assignment that enhances professional development while meeting Air Force needs without necessarily keying on a specific position or location.

9.1. The individual is expected to do well in his or her current assignment. When an individual becomes eligible for reassignment, he or she should address assignment preferences with the supervisor.

9.2. AFI 36-2110 governs assignment of military personnel. Assignments should complement the individual's professional development needs and be second only to mission requirements. However, the needs of the service may dictate that officers take assignments that are not necessarily consistent with planned career paths.

9.2.1. For officer professional development, see the *Officer Career Path Guide* located on AFPC's website (<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil>), for career path guidance. This site also provides requirements and expectations in a subordinate's particular career specialty. As necessary, supervisors should consult career field/functional managers to refine the match of subordinates with appropriate jobs.

9.2.2. For enlisted professional development, review the CFETP.

10. Recognition, Awards, and Decorations. All military and civilian members are eligible for consideration for various decorations throughout their career, but recommendations should not be submitted just to "do something for your people." Restrict recommendations to recognition of meritorious service, outstanding achievement, etc., which clearly places the individual above his or her peers.

10.1. AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*, provides eligibility and processing instructions for military and civilian personnel.

10.2. AFI 36-2805, *Special Trophies and Awards*, describes recognition sponsored by the US Air Force and private organizations that seek Air Force participation. It applies to all active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard members and civilian employees paid through appropriated funds.

10.3. AFI 36-1004, *Managing the Civilian Recognition Program*, addresses civilian recognition programs.

DONALD L. PETERSON, Lt General, USAF
DCS/Personnel

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFPD 36-4, *Air Force Civilian Training Education*

AFPD 36-6, *Civilian Career Management*

AFPD 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*

AFPD 36-34, *Air Force Mentoring Program*

AFI 36-102, *Basic Authority and Responsibility for Civilian Personnel Management and Administration*

AFI 36-401, *Employee Training and Development*

AFI 36-601, *Air Force Civilian Career Program Management*

AFI 36-602, *Civilian Intern Positions*

AFI 36-704, *Civilian Conduct and Responsibility*

AFI 36-1001, *Managing the Civilian Performance Program.*

AFI 36-1004, *Managing the Civilian Recognition Program*

AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*

AFI 36-2301, *Professional Military Education*

AFI 36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*

AFI 36-2403, *Enlisted Evaluation System*

AFI 36-2501, *Officer Promotions and Selective Continuation*

AFI 36-2502, *Airman Promotion Program*

AFI 36-2618, *The Enlisted Force Structure*

AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*

AFI 36-2805, *Special Trophies and Awards*

AFI 36-2909, *Professional and Unprofessional Relationships*

AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*

AFDD1-1, *Air Force Task List*

AFPAM 36-2404, *Guide to the USAF Officer Evaluation System*

AFPAM 36-2506, *You and Your Promotion - The Air Force Officer Promotion Program*

AFPAM 36-2627, *Airman & NCO Performance Feedback System*

AFMAN 36-606, Vol. 2 *Air Force Civilian Career Planning*

Officer Career Path Guide (<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil>)

CSAF Professional Reading Program

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFCOMAP—Air Force Cadet/Officer Mentor Action Program

AFIP—Air Force Intern Program

CGOC—Company Grade Officer Council

LPDP—Lieutenant's Professional Development Program

PME—Professional Military Education

SOS—Squadron Officer School

Attachment 2**CHIEF OF STAFF PROFESSIONAL READING LIST****Enlisted Basic List**

The Passing of the Night, *Risner*

Ten Propositions Regarding Air Power, *Meilinger*

Enlisted Intermediate List

They Also Flew: The Enlisted Pilot Legacy, *Arbon*

Lincoln on Leadership, *Phillips*

Ten Propositions Regarding Air Power, *Meilinger*

Enlisted Advanced List

Makers of the USAF, *Frisbee*

Winged Victory, *Perret*

This Kind of War, *Fehrenbach*

The Killer Angels, *Shaara*

Officer Basic List

A Few Great Captains, *Copp*

The Right Stuff, *Wolfe*

Hostile Skies, *Hudson*

Officers in Flight Suits, *Sherwood*

This Kind of War, *Fehrenbach*

Thud Ridge, *Broughton*

Heart of the Storm, *Reynolds*

Winged Shield, Winged Sword, *Nalty* (ed.)

Winged Victory, *Perret*

Ten Propositions Regarding Air Power, *Meilinger*

Lincoln on Leadership, *Phillips*

Officer Intermediate List

Rise of the Fighter Generals, *Worden*

Beyond Horizons, *Spires*
Makers of Modern Strategy, *Paret*
Air Power: A Centennial Appraisal, *Mason*
General Kenney Reports, *Kenney*
The First Air War, *Kennett*
Over Lord, *Hughes*
USAF in Korea, *Futrell*
Storm Over Iraq, *Hallion*

Officer Advanced List

Dereliction of Duty, *McMaster*
Air Power Against an Army, *Andrews*
On War, *Clausewitz*
Ideas and Weapons, *Holley*
Flight of the Buffalo, *Belasco*
The Heavens and the Earth, *McDougal*
The Sky on Fire, *Fredette*
Why the Allies Won, *Overy*
Hoyt S. Vandenberg, *Meilinger*
Strategy for Defeat, *Sharp*
Joint Air Operations, *Winnefeld*
The Air Campaign, *Warden*

Civilian Grades GS 1-8

The Passing of the Night, *Risner*
Ten Propositions Regarding Air Power, *Meilinger*
They Also Flew: The Enlisted Pilot Legacy, *Arbon*
Lincoln on Leadership, *Phillips*
Makers of the USAF, *Frisbee*
Winged Victory, *Perret*
Profiles in Courage, *Kennedy*
The Killer Angels, *Shaara*

Civilian Grades GS 9-12

The Art of War, *Sun-Tzu*

Ten Propositions Regarding Air Power, *Meilinger*

Lincoln on Leadership, *Phillips*

The Right Stuff, *Wolfe*

Hostile Skies, *Hudson*

A Few Great Captains, *Copp*

Winged Victory, *Perret*

Officers in Flight Suits, *Sherwood*

This Kind of War, *Fehrenbach*

Thud Ridge, *Broughton*

We Were Soldiers Once and Young, *Moore & Galloway*

Heart of the Storm, *Reynolds*

Civilian Grades GS 13-14

Makers of Modern Strategy, *Paret*

Air Power: A Centennial Appraisal, *Mason*

General Kenney Reports, *Kenney*

Deke!, *Slayton*

The First Air War, *Kennett*

Over Lord, *Hughes*

USAF in Korea, *Futrell*

The Limits of Airpower, *Clodfelter*

Storm Over Iraq, *Hallion*

Civilian Grades GS 15 and Above

On War, *Clausewitz*

Ideas and Weapons, *Holley*

Flight of the Buffalo, *Belasco*

The Heavens and the Earth, *McDougal*

The Sky on Fire, *Fredette*

Why the Allies Won, *Overy*

Hoyt S. Vandenberg, *Meilinger*

Strategy for Defeat, *Sharp*

Joint Air Operation, *Winnefeld*

Joint Military Operations, *Beaumont*

The Generals' War, *Gordon & Trainor*

The Air Campaign, *Warden*

Professional Journal to be read by civilians of all grades

Airpower Journal

Attachment 3

THE MENTORING TOOLBOX

NOTE: There are several “tools” that can be used to facilitate mentoring for officers, enlisted, and civilians. The following is a list of organizations, associations, and programs that support various segments of the military population. This list is not all-inclusive, is provided for information only, and should not be considered an endorsement of their activities by the US Air Force.

A3.1. National Organizations for Certification and Licensing. The base education center has a list of nationally recognized organizations who authorize licensing and certification programs, to include who is eligible to apply.

A3.2. Company Grade Officer Council (CGOC). This organization is active in helping the base and local community. It is normally active at each base under guidance from the host command.

A3.3. Air Force Intern Program (AFIP), HQ USAF/DPDE, 1040 Pentagon, Washington, DC 20330-1040. Gives future leaders early Pentagon experience.

A3.4. Lieutenant’s Professional Development Program (LPDP). This program fills the professional development gap between commissioning and Squadron Officer School. Normally active under guidance from the base’s host command.

A3.5. The Order of Daedalians and the Airlift/Tanker Association. Professional associations of military pilots.

A3.6. The Air Force Association (AFA), 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209. Founded in 1946 to support air power and a strong national defense. Lobbies on all Air Force-related issues.

A3.7. The Association of Military Surgeons of the US, 9320 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda, MD 20814. Founded in 1891 to represent physicians and other health care workers of commissioned rank. Mainly a professional development group.

A3.8. Military Chaplains Association of the USA, P.O. Box 42660, Washington DC 20015. Founded in 1925 for Army chaplains. Chartered by Congress in 1950 to represent the interests of all military chaplains. Lobbies Congress on pay, benefits, and preservation of the chaplain corps.

A3.9. The National Association of Uniformed Services (NAUS), 5535 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151. Founded in 1968 to represent anyone who wears (or has worn) a uniform. Lobbies for an array of pay and benefits.

A3.10. The Retired Officers Association (TROA), 201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Founded in 1919 to represent retired officers. Focuses on pay and benefits issues.

A3.11. Air Force Cadet/Officer Mentor Action Program, Inc. (AFCOMAP), P.O. Box 47015, Washington, DC 20050. A private organization founded in 1982. Chartered by SAF and CSAF. Commit-

ted to supporting the Air Force in the recruitment, professional development, and retention of cadets and junior officers. Originally founded for minority officers, but open to all.

A3.12. Air University Library, 600 Chennault Circle, Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424. Houses well-balanced collections especially strong in the fields of war fighting, aeronautics, Air Force and DoD operations, military sciences, education, leadership, and management.

A3.13. Civil Air Patrol (CAP), 105 South Hansell St., Bldg 714, Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6332. The volunteer civilian auxiliary of the Air Force. CAP performs emergency service missions to include air and ground search and rescue, disaster relief, and drug interdiction. It promotes citizenship, leadership, physical fitness, and aerospace education through its cadet programs.

A3.14. National Guard Association of the US (NGAUS), 1 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001. Represent officers in the National Guard and Air National Guard. Focuses on National Guard issues.

A3.15. Reserve Officers Association (ROA), 1 Constitution Ave, NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Founded in 1950 to represent reserve officers. Focuses on reserve issues.

A3.16. AF Reserve's Junior Officer Leadership Development Seminar. Offers different professional development programs at diverse locations across the US at varied times. Open to active duty members.

A3.17. AF Sergeant's Association, PO Box 50, Temple Hills, MD 20757-0050, (301) 899-3500 (<http://www.afsahq.org>)

A3.18. NCO Association, 225 N. Washington St., Alexandria VA, 22314, (703)549-0311 (www.ncoausa.org).